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EDUCATION ISSUE

April 14, 1950

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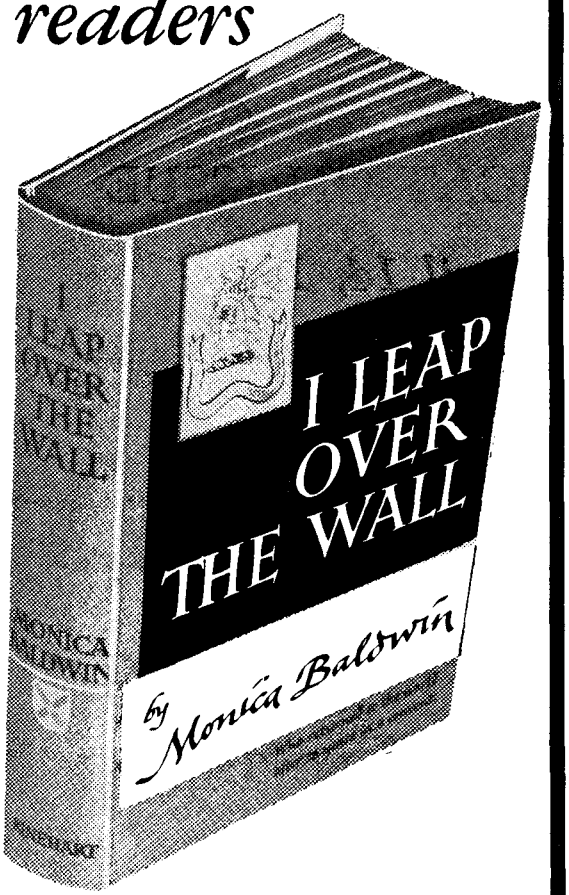

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The Commonweal

WEEK BY WEEK

State of Europe's Defenses

AGREEMENT on an integrated defense plan for Western Europe by the twelve Atlantic Defense Ministers at the Hague is an announcement which has not dispelled a certain realistic pessimism. The gloomiest of American strategists believe that Europe cannot be held against Russian ground troops, planes and submarines; they pin their hopes on North Africa as the defense line from which reconquest must begin. Some French military men are even more extreme; they declare that only the Sahara and Central Africa could stop an all-out Russian surge.

All this is on the basis of present forces at the disposal of the Soviets and of the twelve Atlantic nations. It is also based on the fearful assumption that the Kremlin decides to invade Western Europe this spring or early summer. Since a monolithic aggressive dictatorship is capable of almost any move, that is one possibility which must be envisaged.

If, however, Allied strategists are to have more time—as is generally expected—they will still experience great difficulty in building up an adequate defending ground force. Although Mr. Lippmann and some others appear to think that French troops should provide the main constituent, most observers believe that German troops must also play a leading role. Defense of Western Europe without Germany is inconceivable.

Since it is hard to imagine such German participation without some revival of that nation's munitions industries and its hated general staff, the French and others have strenuous objections. Here Britain holds the key. If the Labor Government would now commit itself to full partnership in the European union, British participation would serve as a counterbalance and greatly allay French fears. Then Germany would not inevitably dominate an all-Europe defense force.

The fact that final decisions in these matters must necessarily rest in other hands makes it particularly difficult for the United States. We can advise, cajole and seek to build up the European union economically, politically and militarily, but we cannot dictate. We can make plain the degree to which we hold ourselves engaged, but we cannot go beyond moral suasion. We can say quite frankly that in defending Western Europe we believe that we are defending our own nation. And we can hold our position in Berlin and other zones we occupy with convincing tenacity.

All this points up the military importance of two other developments which are desirable in themselves: the expansion of our European imports to the level of American exports to Europe and the integrating and unifying of the several European economies and currency systems.

With Marshall aid the countries of Western Europe have been able to bring their industrial and farm production back to the pre-war level. Due to this modicum of prosperity and stability the danger of the Communists' taking over from within is past. The threat from without remains. Along with adequate military, naval and air defenses, Western Europe requires the further economic expansion and integration essential for genuine self-support and political stability. That is why continuing economic intervention by the United States on the scale needed will have much to do with determining whether in the face of an eventual Russian invasion Western Europe is tenable or not.

The Logic of Food

SIMPLE people sometimes find the world of politics too much for them. When things look hopelessly complicated and even downright illogical, the pundit-columnists may find valuable grist for their mills, but millions of ordinary people merely shrug their shoulders.

American food surpluses provide a case in point. Ever since the little pigs were slaughtered

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• NEXT WEEK •

For years Quebec has been the happy hunting ground of capital. So long as Catholicism remained strong, business men expected to be untroubled by radicalism, says MURRAY BALLANTYNE in "Quebec Bishops and American Capital." But things are changing.

"Catholic universities are preaching interpretations of the social encyclicals which are revolutionary in their implications; . . . and even a bishop has been heard publicly to condemn capitalism and call for its replacement rather than its reform."

while millions were merely getting along on a starvation diet, it has seemed to simple people—and especially to hungry simple people—that the whole program of food distribution was being conducted on an extra-logical level where only dog-whistles are heard and none but politicians find sense.

We are not now in the midst of a depression. Still it is estimated that 10 million Americans are undernourished. Meanwhile there are $5-billion of government funds tied up in surplus food commodities which, under the present law, the government is obliged to buy in order to keep it off the market.

Vermont's Senator George D. Aiken (R) thinks that there is an obvious connection between these two facts and that something should be done to tie them together. Since 1943 he has been re-introducing a "food allotment plan" in every session of Congress. So far without success.

Senator Aiken's plan—he offers it now as an alternative to Secretary Brannan's costly program—would distribute some of our surplus food to the Americans who need it most, the underfed low-income group. It is estimated that the average family has to spend 40% of its income on food. Obviously, the lower the income sinks, the higher that percentage rises, if the family is to be decently nourished. A family of four with an income, say, of $100 monthly needs more than $40 for food. Ordinarily, $15 a person would be a basic requirement. If the "food allotment plan" were put into effect, such a family could use a special government stamp to buy the necessary $60 worth of food for the $40 it had to spend. Only low-income families could benefit from the plan. The cost of the program, says Senator Aiken, would at most be slightly more than the present price of keeping surplus food (to the undernourished, what a bitter phrase that must be!) off the market—the ironic cost of seeing to it that food goes unused, uneaten.

There is logic in the Senator's plan. It seems to make sense; especially to those who are not getting enough to eat. For them it makes supreme sense.

Congress Looking for Facts

WITH a trail of unresolved accusations behind him, always ready with a new charge the minute the committee gets a good look at the last one, Senator McCarthy has mixed mere assertion with sound evidence. But some

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needed repairs in our bi-partisan foreign policy have resulted, substantiating a remark once made about silver linings. And there has been a second positive reaction, a serious questioning of the technique of congressional investigation. There were proposals in and out of the Senate that the McCarthy charges be put in non-partisan hands. Senator Lodge suggested a secret, independent commission paralleling the Canadian Royal Commission. Others wanted a Grand Jury.

The most interesting proposal came in a series of three articles in the New York *Herald Tribune,* where the Burgess Professor of Public Law at Columbia, Lindsay Rogers, discussed the whole problem of congressional investigations.

Rogers' charge against the present system is not so much that it is open to misuse by such political maneuverings as Senator McCarthy has indulged in, as that it is simply inefficient and very often incompetent.

Congressmen have little time which they can devote to the investigation, their cross-examination is "with rare exception . . . ludicrously feeble," they are subject to political pressures, and the conclusions are usually split and open to political attack.

Rogers proposes that Congress put investigations in the hands of capable and disinterested public figures. His plan is that upon a concurrent resolution in the houses of Congress, the Chief Justice would appoint members of a Congressional Investigating Commission which would have the powers of a United States District Court. The members would be required to leave their private undertakings for the duration of the investigation. In public session (except when the nature of the testimony or the subject of the investigation made privacy advisable) the Commission would have power to compel witnesses to appear, to examine them under oath, to require production of documents, and to initiate contempt proceedings. Witnesses would have the immunity from defamation charges that they would enjoy in court.

Those persons who are being investigated would have the protection they would have in court, and the Commission in turn would have full power to make a fast, thorough, competent investigation, and could employ the expert assistance — counsel, investigators, etc. — it needed. The serious question of invasion of rights which some congressional committees, most notably those of Dies and Thomas, have raised, would be finally settled. And the Commission findings would surely have the public confidence—as the present scandal-screaming investigations just as surely do not.

From Small Beginnings

IF ONE were asked to name the two most characteristic features of life in the latter nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, he could do worse than to agree with Arnold Toynbee that they are: representative democracy and industrialism. These two great social and economic ideas have set the pattern of our culture. Certainly they have set the pattern of our system of education, which has provided schools for the many and, in order to do this efficiently, has borrowed the technique of the assembly line.

The system has its virtues. But on the whole, as Mr. Toynbee believes, we have been successful only in providing the student with information not with an education, not with a devotion to the life of the mind. Why is this?

Of the many answers to that question, none, we daresay, is any more important than this: almost anyone who has attended our schools will admit, if he is honest, that at one time or another he has felt that what he was doing was faintly deceitful and ridiculous. Most of his time he spent copying another's ideas into a notebook and then, in an infinite series of quizzes, firing the same ideas back again with one big aim in view: to get his certificate and to get out. He performed like a high hurdler or a smart dog, but as a man, he was more likely to feel, in T. S. Eliot's words, either hollow or stuffed.

What he missed, or only spasmodically experienced, is the pleasure of knowing. "The beautiful," says St. Thomas, "is that which being seen pleases." What St. Thomas has defined is a joy that is scarcely definable, and the joy of learning is akin to it; a man can happily be seized with such pleasure once in awhile and then he knows, in a way, what that vague phrase "the life of the mind" really means. He knows that he has at least begun to love wisdom.

That is a love that one would like to see increased and multiplied in his own life and in the lives of others and for that reason we can take hope from the suggestions made by Willis Nutting in the article that follows. The plan he proposes is not the sort of thing that is likely to sweep the country. Rather, if it comes to life at all, it will grow as quietly as a flower, and perhaps to say that is to speak of it as highly and as gratefully as we can.

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Mark Hopkins, the Log and the Dollar

A plan to renew the life of liberal education at the grass roots.

Willis D. Nutting

KEEPING up with the Joneses is as exhausting in the field of education as it is in social life, the Joneses in the former case being the tax-supported schools. The strain is most apparent among us Catholics in our higher education. The flamboyant expansion of the state universities, with their courses on tap dancing and household insects and the like, sets a pattern which it is pretty hard for us to keep from trying to imitate, for our parents want their children to know about tap dancing and household insects too. The enormous cost of such "higher" education makes the raising of funds the almost all-absorbing duty of our college heads. Indeed, it forces them to spend so much time on this urgent task that they find it difficult to wedge in any moments for the consideration of what is really important educationally. The struggle does not seem to be getting any less hectic. Our people are not learning to give to the extent that we consider necessary.

The obvious explanation of this reticence on the part of our people in the matter of giving to our colleges is that they do not yet appreciate the need of Catholic education. Another and less complimentary one might be that their observation as to what we do with what we have does not give them the confidence to give us more. This latter possibility is worthy of further investigation, for it may be that their reluctance to support our demands is the result of a healthy but inarticulate suspicion. When we tell them that we are carrying on the Western Tradition, that we are preserving the Christian scheme of values in a world sunk in materialism, that we are the only stronghold of Liberal Education where everyone else has surrendered to positivism, it may be that they are not sure enough of what we mean to risk their money on us.

And their lack of assurance may be due to the fact that we ourselves are not so very sure of what we mean. Look at the catalogues of our colleges. They all modestly admit that we Catholics are the sole remaining custodians of the Christian educational tradition. They proclaim that the Liberal Arts are the most important part of education. After this pious genuflection they turn to what will really interest their customers—the course in dietetics, the new residence hall and the golf course. And the enthusiasm with which we relate the details of these attractions indicates that it is not only the customers who are interested in them, but that we ourselves share their interest. We have a firm but vague conviction that liberal education is good. We have a still more vague idea that we ourselves are giving such an education. But our real interest and understanding is directed elsewhere—toward professional education and research.

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HERE we have an illuminating situation. Our fundamental purpose, our reason for existence, is to present to the world a teaching integrated in the Catholic Faith, so that our young people may receive an intellectual formation in the Christian Tradition. But our actual efforts are directed to keeping up with the Joneses. We try to do what the state institutions do. They are interested in vocational and professional education, and so are we. They regard the specialist scholar as the high water mark of intellectuality, and so do we. Their Liberal Arts Colleges are hodgepodges of everything that does not fit in elsewhere, and so are ours—with religion tacked on.

I said the situation was illuminating. It is so in this way: it puts the spotlight on the fact that what we claim to do and what we do are different things. There is a fundamental disorder at the heart of our ideas—a theoretical exaltation of one educational ideal and a practical employment of another. This may be the real reason why our people fail to contribute adequately to our schools.

However important professional education and research may be for Catholic institutions, we are right when we claim that a liberal education is more important. Indeed we are much righter than we realize, and it is therefore a great misfortune that in our practice such education is reduced almost to futility, not only being put in the place of last importance but being so dis-

WILLIS D. NUTTING *is a professor of History at Notre Dame, and is the author of "The Reclamation of Independence," and "How Firm a Foundation." He is an advisory editor of the Review of Politics.*

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figured that it is even more unimportant than its place would indicate.

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THIS is why a real liberal education is important: the whole ideological and institutional structure of Christian civilization is disintegrating. It has been under attack for several centuries in the upper brackets of the intellectual world, and now no stratum of society is immune from the effects of this attack. The truths that men lived by—their ideas of God and man, of good and bad, of sensible and foolish, and the institutions that handed down these truths—the Church, the home, the community, the craft, the profession, none of these things is any longer capable of exerting much influence in our society.

Therefore we are becoming a people adrift. There is no need to point out the dangers of our position. It is shouted from the pulpits and from the magazines. If our society is to survive in anything like the form we cherish, the ideas and the institutions which have built and continued our civilization must be restored to their former power. But once an idea or an institution has lost its traditional influence, that influence cannot be restored *as a tradition.* We cannot, for example, say to people, "We must all work to bring back the good old days when strong family life was taken for granted." No, when a tradition loses its force the ideas contained in it can only be brought back as *reasoned convictions.*

This bringing about of a reasoned acceptance of the ideas of a Christian civilization is the job of liberal higher education, and it is much the most important job in the whole educational field, much more important than professional training or scientific research. It is much more important than literacy itself. The creating of a scheme of liberal education that will be effective, therefore, is the most important task that we face now.

But in addition to creating the scheme of education, we must create means to bring it to the points where it is needed. The very fact that our society is democratic necessitates a very wide extension of that system of education whose purpose is to influence leaders. Our leadership is not found in Hollywood or Harvard or Washington, but in Middletown and Centerville and Metropolis, and in these latter places it reposes in those men and women to whom others look for guidance in opinion, action, dress, mannerisms, etc. Our catastrophe comes from the fact that these people are almost completely innocent of any convictions with regard to the vital foundations of Christian civilization.

Our leaders come from all walks of life. They are of both sexes and all ages, and have been subject to many kinds of education or none at all. They must all be reached by our Christian liberal education. Most of them cannot and will not come to our colleges, and the colleges would not take most of them if they came, for there would be something wrong with their high school credits. We must go to them.

It is usually true that new educational schemes develop new institutions for their realization. We may look for such new institutions to meet the present situation. We could hazard a guess as to what the specifications would be.

In the first place the new institution must be of a kind that can spring up anywhere. That is, it must not need size or elaborateness or costliness. Then it must be so made as to be able to take in people of various ages and degrees of previous education, and it must be able to teach them at various times—evenings, summers, winter months and so on, for comparatively few of the people whom we wish to reach could devote their whole time to being educated.

The much talked about Great Books scheme of education has given us a lead which may be of great help. It has shown us that an effective education can be given without costly equipment. All that is needed is a teacher, students, a place to meet, a small library and a simple laboratory. There would be no need of elaborate residence halls or a gymnasium or playing fields. A dwelling house or store building would be enough. Moreover, the scheme has shown the effectiveness of the omnicompetent teacher, one who is able to take the students through the various subjects presented in the curriculum. A competent teacher is different from a competent scholar. He does not have to be an expert in all the fields that he teaches, or in any of them. He has to possess the knowledge that he wishes the student to have, and he has to be able to inspire the student with an enthusiasm for the life of the intellect, which of course he must also possess himself. With this kind of teacher the staff of the institution would not have to be numerous.

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IT IS IN A SETTING such as we have been imagining that the saying concerning Mark Hopkins and the log has validity. Mark Hopkins, sitting on a log with a student, could not possibly train the student to be a dentist or an atomic physicist or a competent scholar in Middle English. But he might do what is vastly more important: he might lead the student to love wisdom and justice, and set him on the path of attaining both. In our task of rebuilding a Christian civilization, it is Mark Hopkinses that are needed, and logs for them to sit on, and students for them to influence. And the beauty of it is that Mark Hopkinses do not need enormous numbers of dollars in order to function. They need almost no equipment. A living will suffice.

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and the respect of the community.

The ideal, then, of an effective method for bringing the necessary post-high-school education to our society would demand the establishment of one of these new institutions in every community. Its center would be a small staff of teachers who would regard their teaching as their particular vocation in the apostolate. They would be the permanent nucleus of the educational community. Around this nucleus the other elements in this community would form, and each institution would be differently composed. There would be young high school graduates who wanted to advance in learning. There would be adults who wanted to receive what their experience had shown them to lack.

This institution—call it a college if you wish—could supply what our local communities so sadly lack: a center for bringing out and mobilizing the wisdom, the ability, the experience, and the good sense of the community, to meet the community's problems. Local people could come to it for guidance and to guide others. It would thus partake of the nature of the School of Living so forcefully advocated by Ralph Borsodi. It would also partake of the nature of the Danish Folk School which has had so large a part in restoring the health of Danish society.

As to the manner in which the institution is supported, there would be great variation. It could be a cooperative venture at first, with students and teachers living together and working together to cut down expenses with some income coming from outside. Or it could be sponsored at first by a parish or group of parishes. Or it could be endowed by a private donor. Whatever the means taken to get it started, it would soon become an organic part of the community, which our existing colleges seldom are, and since local people could know it and see it functioning, they would be certain to be more inclined to contribute to it than to schools they know only from begging publicity—for giving comes with appreciation.

And it must not be thought that such a school, and its teachers, would have to remain in the lower realms of intellectual attainment. We have come to associate high attainment with research, complete with laboratories, libraries, bibliographies and footnotes, but that is only one kind of intellectual activity, although the only one appreciated now. (Socrates would have no chance at Columbia.) But when a person has steeped himself in the truly great thought of our tradition—and such thought is contained in not too many books—then he can begin to do some great thinking on his own, and perhaps some great writing. These little schools could well become the centers for a literary, philosophical, sociological and economic renaissance which would change the face of society.

THERE are of course colossal difficulties in the way of setting up such schools, most of them psychological. Our educational system is so standardized that the new schools would not be "recognized." They could not give degrees. Therefore people would hesitate to send students to them, and teachers would find it hard to tear themselves away from the conventionalities of their profession. Perhaps the venture would have to be started with completely new blood—by a new kind of teacher. Perhaps the first students would be adults who were not looking for a degree. The initial leap would be hard for all concerned. But the scheme is fundamentally sound. It would give a better liberal education than our schools are now giving, and would give it to more people. It would supply local communities with the intellectual and moral centers that they need, and it would bring the cost of education down from the astronomical to the possible, for there would be no need to keep up with the Joneses. We would be looking in a different direction.

★

THE Church has been able in the past to give renewed energy to dying societies. Within its fold there is an infinite possibility of life, and this life shows itself in new ideas, new energies, new institutions and new ideals which proceed from it to affect the secular society. Christian civilization is not a steady progress but an exciting series of renewals after everything is all but lost. The Grace of God working in the Church causes new growths to shoot up through the dead leafage of the past, until the world is green again.

There are signs all around us of a great awakening. There is spring in the air. There is life stirring. It is stirring in the field of education. The ideas which I have sketched here are not simply my own. They are being talked about in many places. There are young people ready to graduate from college who are eager to start something new. They are willing to make sacrifices, and to make them for true Christian education. They are looking for places to start. It would be a disaster if places were not offered.

For it may be that it is by education that the Church will revitalize our dying society and thus win it to herself. If we Catholics furnish the leadership in restoring the ideals of Christian civilization to the people of this century, they will not be ungrateful. But we can furnish this leadership only at the grass roots, only by setting up institutions which will become a vital and organic part of the local community, so that all men can see that what we stand for is of supreme value. We have not done this yet in the modern world. It is high time to start something.

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The Vestige of God

In some schools God is an elective and almost nobody takes Him; in others, He isn't tolerated—How, then, is virtue acquired?

Milton Mayer

DURING the Nazi occupation of Norway, a Norwegian schoolgirl, 12 years old, was caught smuggling food to Russian soldiers held as prisoners of war. The camp was only a half mile from the school, and the knowledge was notorious that the prisoners were being starved. The girl was brought before a Gestapo interrogator, who asked her if she knew that her activity was illegal. She said she did. Why, then, did she do it? "Because," she said, "I have been taught that I must feed hungry people." "But," said the interrogator, "these Russians are not people, they are beasts." "I was also taught," said the girl, "that I must feed hungry beasts."

In this anecdote—it happens to be true, but no matter—I sense the irresistible imperative to right action. I should like to be able to teach myself that imperative. I should like to be able to teach it to my children. I should like to believe that people generally could be taught it, even in the modest degree required for conceding its validity, as the Gestapo interrogator conceded it when he tried to flank it instead of assaulting it.

The schoolgirl said she had been taught it. How?

Socrates, before he acquired his *ad hoc* inner voice, worked out two incomplete, and contradictory, answers. Knowledge is that which can be taught. Right action depends, in one dialogue, upon a form of knowledge, "the art of measurement." In another, it depends not upon knowledge, but upon "the gift of God;" the gift, in him to whom it has already been given, can only be buttressed by knowledge.

Since Socrates, we have not made any appreciable progress in the problem of right action. Natural science—the area of distinctive advance in the interval—has made two tentative contributions that come to mind. Some of the handmaidens of psychology suggest, gaily, that the problem can be solved by the discovery that it does not exist. And some of the handmaidens of biology suggest its solution by frontal lobotomy, known to newspaper readers as "the immorality operation." The handmaidens are at present in dispute. "I think," said the director of the New York State Psychiatric Institute recently, "that lobotomy should be stopped before we dement too large a section of the population."

Meanwhile, we continue to praise, without being able to produce, intentionally and in quantity, those few schoolchildren and still fewer alumni who *must* feed the hungry.

The formal educational process—the school system, from bottom to top—by definition eschews the irresistible imperative. Since it is compelled to affirm the ideal of the state, it talks about "education for democracy;" but its proper objects are knowledge, which merely tells us what is, and art, which merely perfects us in doing whatever is to be done. *What is to be done* is properly frowned upon as propaganda, indoctrination, or dogma, except where all the alternative *whats* are taught indifferently. (There are those, and their name might be said to be legion, who would forbid even the indifferent teaching of certain *whats*, such as Communism, on the presumptive ground that they contain an irresistible imperative). Even those educators who subscribe to the indifferent teaching of what is to be done would reject the notion that it is either their business or their power to teach what should, much less what must, be done.

The Norwegian schoolgirl had been *taught* that she must feed the hungry. Teaching is the distinguishing act of education, but I have never been able to discover an educational answer to the question, "Why must I feed the hungry?" Yet this is the question that most insistently, and phrased in various forms like, "Why must I be good?" or, "Why must I be just?" demands an answer of me.

I have been taught, by no less than Rousseau, that I must feed the hungry because they and I are members of the same biological species. But I know of biological species whose members not only do not feed each other, but feed on each other.

I have been taught, by no less than Plato and Freud, that I must be good lest I suffer disharmony of the psyche. But I find that many of my acquaintances—not I, of course—have been able to achieve a balanced discord which, though it

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MILTON MAYER *is most widely known for his articles in Harper's, Life, the Christian Century, etc. He is special representative of the Great Books Foundation, and a lecturer for the American Friends Service Committee and the Jewish Peace Fellowship.*

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oppresses the righteous, is music to the ears of the damned. Some of the most unjust men I know sleep the sleep of the just. When I tell them that they sleep so soundly only in order to escape their own injustices, they say, "There is nothing like a good night's sleep."

I have been taught that I must be good lest I be caught, but I have been a police reporter in my time, and I know that the proportion of bad men who are never caught is high enough to justify my taking a chance, especially if I am clever, and more especially if I am both clever and under great pressure to be bad.

I have been taught that I must be good because I need my fellow-men. I can see where I would be impressed by this educational argument if I were poor, weak, and stupid; not otherwise. I do not need the hungry man I feed, and my feeding him will not increase my chances of being fed by still a third party. I shall never be an old lady standing in a street car; why should I give up my seat? If I am strong, powerful, and clever, I shall not need my fellow-men generally (above all, the hungry), and, among my own kind, who are more interesting than the generality of my fellow-men, I shall not want for close companions.

As a student, I have asked the question of my teachers. As a teacher, I have been asked the question by my students. And these are the only educational answers I have ever been able to get or give.

II

I AM WALKING down a dark street late at night. The street lighting has failed and the street is deserted. As it happens, it is the night of the policemen's ball. I need exactly $5 to pay my wife's hospital bill. A blind man sits at the curb. In addition to being blind, he is dumb, legless, and armless. I approach the man and ask him if he would like a cigarette. He nods and opens his mouth, I place a cigarette in it, and by the light of my match I see that his hat has two pencils in it, some small change, and a $5 bill.

Why shouldn't I take the $5 bill?

(I'll replace it next week, next month at the latest).

Why shouldn't I take it?

(I'll bet he doesn't even know he has it).

Why shouldn't I take it?

(The silver alone is a good day's haul for a blind man).

Why shouldn't I take it?

(*I need it desperately, and I'll never be caught*).

Why shouldn't I take it?

This question, in any of its forms and under any of its circumstances, including labor relations, business relations, race relations, and international relations, is the only serious question I have. If this question is outside education, and if this is the only serious question I have, of exactly what use to me is the education I get or give, be it liberal or vocational, general or specialized, humanistic or scientific?

I can make an argument for the kind of education known as liberal, general, and humanistic, but my argument leaves something, namely, the answer, to be desired. True, this kind of education, in contrast with the vocational, specialized, and scientific, will acquaint me with the question, with the methods of answering it, and with the answers that others have made. But life itself acquaints me with the question at every turn—I asked it when I was four years old—and method of mind, rather than of action, always fails me at the instant of actual answer. And the answers of Aristotle and Kant, as well as those of Rousseau and Plato and Freud I have already found inadequate.

In despair, I leaf through the poet, any poet. This one tells me that I am not an island unto myself, but a part of the main. A lofty sentiment, but I can neither teach nor learn sentiments. I am looking for an imperative. In deeper despair, I leaf on, and the poet tires of telling me what I am and passes to a form of discourse that is neither sentiment, which can not be taught, nor science, which can be:

That learning, thine Ambassador,
From thine allegiance wee never tempt,
That beauty, paradise's flower
For physicke made, from poyson be exempt,
That wit, borne apt high good to doe,
By dwelling lazily
On Nature's nothing, be not nothing too,
That our affections kill us not, nor dye,
Hear us, weake echoes, O thou ear, and cry.
Pater noster qui es in caelis:
Sanctificetur . . .

Now I know why I shouldn't take the blind man's money. I shouldn't take the blind man's money because I love him. And I don't love him because he and I are members of the same species, or because I sleep better (or worse) for loving him, or because it won't always be the night of the policeman's ball, or because I will be a blind man myself some day; still less because mine is a loving heart (it isn't). I love the blind man because I *must* love him. I am *commanded* —but this is not within my or any man's power to enforce, and certainly not any intellect's—to *love*. Now I know how the Norwegian schoolgirl was "taught" that she must feed the hungry. I have found the imperative—"And this commandment have we from Him"—but I have not found it in education. Is it there?

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III

EVEN in the nominally denominational schools of my acquaintance, God is an elective, and almost nobody takes Him. The mottos of these schools are sometimes Godly, but the mottos do not seem to govern the curriculum. In one of these schools, the ancient charter proclaims its purpose as "the total abolition of all forms of sin," but this purpose has not been achieved, even locally, nor is the faculty nor, of course, the student body, slavishly preoccupied with achieving it.

The public schools will not tolerate God even as an elective. He is excluded along with gum-chewing and other childish diversions. Jefferson wanted Him in the public schools — see *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson, Memorial Edition,* 1904, pp. 414-17—because "the relations existing between man and his Maker, and the duties resulting from those relations, are the most interesting and important to every human being," but Jefferson has been found unconstitutional. (*McCollum vs. Board of Education,* U. S. Supreme Court, Oct. Term, 1947). Freedom of worship necessarily means freedom not to worship. When we do not want to worship, necessity becomes the national policy.

There are left the truly denominational schools. In these we find a vestige of God. But this very vestige serves as a handicap to these schools in so far as they are schools and, as such, are established to *teach.* They offer teachable courses in stage swordplay, cosmetology, and garage accounting as avidly as the secular schools, but they can not compete with the secular schools as teaching institutions because their religious commitment compels them to concern themselves with the character of the teacher. The sole concern of the secular schools—and the basis of their academic freedom—is the competence of the teacher to teach. The ethics professor may be a reprobate weekends as long as he teaches ethics competently from Monday through Friday. The secular and nominally denominational schools are not handicapped by the vestige of God in their hiring policies.

I see no evidence, and, so far as I know, there is none, that the compulsory devotionals and the course requirements in religion change the course of the lives of the truly denominational students. Instead of finding more Godliness in a truly denominational university than I find in a nominally denominational or secular university, I find an absolutely unbeatable football team in the former, and I find its alumni no more Godly than those of its sister institution's and a little more monotonous on the subject of football.

The vestige of God turns up in the truly denominational schools of every denomination, but nearly always in the same odd and embarrassed

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areas of the school's activity. The faithless say that God fails to change the course of the denominational students' lives, but the students encounter only the vestige of God. The vestige is better than nothing; even compulsory courses in religion, like the liberal education referred to earlier, raise the right question. But the transition from question to answer, especially when one is in the intellect (or in the memory) and the other in the will, has never been clearly demonstrated. The humanistic scholars of my acquaintance are not peculiarly humane.

To know God the way I think the Norwegian schoolgirl knew Him, to know Him as the Master whose imperative to love is the law of life, courses in religion may not be enough. St. Thomas says that knowing God is like knowing a country; it is not enough to have maps and histories and descriptions—one must live there. But living with God is not, and can not be, the function of the school *qua* school. The function of the schools is to communicate the only knowledge to which the intellect is receptive, the natural knowledge of maps and histories and descriptions.

The vestige of God in the truly denominational institutions confuses them as to their purpose as educational institutions. It handicaps them in their hiring of professors of stage swordplay and ethics. It competes unsuccessfully with the football team for the attention of their students. And it diverts the entire civilization from bothering to try to answer the question put to the Norwegian schoolgirl by the Gestapo interrogator.

To the extent that the truly denominational institutions nourish the vestige of God, they further handicap their own hiring policy, they lose their football team, and they deny that the communication of knowledge, for which educational institutions are established, is central to answering the Gestapo question. To the extent that they nourish the vestige of God, which they alone now harbor, they will, I think, progressively lose their status as educational institutions. Since they are now handicapped, they might as well go whole hog.

Cosmetology and football are clearly irrelevant to the pursuit of the irresistible imperative. It may turn out that other, perhaps all other, educational subject-matters are, too. The pursuit of the imperative may involve the transformation of education into something else. But it is important, and if the denominational schools do not undertake it, it will not be undertaken.

By nourishing the vestige of God, and forgetting all about tax exemption and constitutional rights in bus rides, the denominational schools will join the issue, frontally, with the prevailing educational doctrine that what can be taught is of use in answering man's critical, and only criti-

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cal, question. If that doctrine, which is now accepted as axiom, is wrong, it is mortally wrong and the prevailing quarrels over content and method, based as they all are on the axiom, are less important than they seem.

Perhaps the Norwegian schoolgirl did not know what she was talking about; she was only 12. Do we? We have constructed a two billion dollar educational plant, in which we constructed a two billion dollar bomb, without stopping to ask ourselves what education would do for us. It will be depressing to discover, when our time runs out, that we have just been whiling it away because we ignored the problem that was posed at the opening of the first recorded discussion of education:

"Can you tell me, Socrates, whether virtue is acquired by teaching or by practice . . . or in what other way?"

The Screen

Deriding Wrinkled Care

THERE are some good laughs in this week's films, and if you are in need of chasing away a couple of blues I suggest you let these pictures help you. You have to admit that Charles Chaplin is the world's greatest living comedian and a genius in the art of film making. *"City Lights,"* first released in 1931, is not his best movie, but it is so far superior to most of the comedies turned out these days that we welcome the fun it offers. If you're looking for propaganda you can probably find it in the contrasts of this story about the gentle tramp (Chaplin) who is the very spirit of kindness and the millionaire (Harry Myers) who is bent on suicide and whose generosity shows up only when he is in his cups.

But if it's comedy you want, satire, slapstick, burlesque and even mild kidding of man's little foibles, you'll find "City Lights" a wealth of humor. Its romance between the sensitive tramp and the blind flower girl (Virginia Cherrill) gets pretty sticky at times, but as a plot device it offers Chaplin, especially when the tramp is trying to make some money to help this girl, a wonderful opportunity for clowning. As a street cleaner, as a substitute prize fighter and even as the helpful friend of his hard-drinking wealthy host, this graceful actor is in a class y himself in using pantomime to convey feelings and emotions. "City Lights" is not a talkie, but it does have music composed by Chaplin who also wrote, directed and produced the movie; and it has some startling sound effects. Who can ever forget the scene at the party in which the comedian swallows a whistle and then gets the hiccups?

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No movie funny-men who followed Chaplin have fit his famous shoes. Some have been quite successful in their own way, which was the only way for them to go; and others have occasionally struck a spark that still wins a hearty laugh. Once in a while Red Skelton manages to spread a little cheer; and if his latest endeavor in *"The Yellow Cab Man"* is rather feeble, it is not entirely his fault. His standard portrait of the big hearted clown has worn thin and needs more support than it gets in this script. Skelton's fans will no doubt be delighted with his antics in learning to drive a cab or in exhibiting his unbreakable glass or in escaping from the bogus psychiatrist. James Gleason, Gloria De Haven, Walter Slezak and others are in the supporting cast, but this is pretty much a one-man show; and a one-man movie needs at least a near-Chaplin.

There are of course good new comedies that don't depend so much on the style of their comedians. *"The Reformer and the Redhead"* is an example and it's very funny in its own way too. Essential to the fun is the good humored script by Norman Panama and Melvin Frank; and perhaps because these men also produced and directed, the film's amusing situations have a feeling of gaiety that is all of one piece. More important than the story, in which a strong-minded redhead (June Allyson) persuades a mayoralty candidate (Dick Powell) to run on a reform ticket, are the witty lines, the slapstick stuff (in which a lot of wild animals are involved) and the good cast's pleasant performances. Supporting the leads are David Wayne, Robert Keith and Cecil Kellaway who come across with delightful humorous touches, as does a young man by the name of Marvin Kaplan who is positively wonderful in his small role of assistant law clerk.

"Cheaper by the Dozen" isn't entirely a comedy, but its fun is so much fun and the Gilbreth book has been so well handled by Producer Lamar Trotti and Director Walter Lang that one remembers its glowing humor more than its sad scenes. Actually this story could have been overdone and made into a sappy, silly movie. But as it stands it is a warm, slightly sentimental movie about a papa and a mama and twelve kids. It has various other people too, boyfriends, doctors, schoolteachers, etc., but it is mainly about the Gilbreths, and especially about mama (excellently played by Myrna Loy who successfully conveys wisdom and motherly love) and papa (Clifton Webb without his snobbish Belvedere mannerisms and with a big-hearted aggressive manliness reminiscent of the Day's father) and all the children, eldest of whom is nicely played by Jeanne Crain. Papa Gilbreth, who was an efficiency expert, may have been difficult to live with at times, but even a bossy guy can have sense enough to know when he's outvoted. That he and his wife did a good job with their large family is made evident after papa's death when the family votes to retain its unity. You may have to wipe away an occasional tear at this movie, but you'll laugh much more than you'll cry, unless of course you're hell-bent for realism.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

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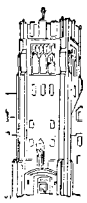

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Discussing Our Aims

Bonaventure Schwinn

SOME one hundred serious men were met together in the plush Men's Faculty Club of Columbia University. Theologians, philosophers, scientists, authors, editors, college and university administrators and professors, Jews, Catholics, Hindu swamis, Protestants, humanists, rationalists, and liberals, they were all educators in one way or another. The occasion was the ninth annual meeting of the Conference on Science, Philosophy and Religion in Their Relation to the Democratic Way of Life. The time was September, 1948. The members of the Conference were assembled to discuss the fundamental problem: goals for American education.

The year 1948 was not too late to be considering goals, although they are the first things to be determined in education. They have been discussed and argued about countless times. The ultimate goal of education remains the same (it was never better stated than by Pius XI in his Encyclical "On the Christian Education of Youth"), but the more immediate objectives are constantly changing in a changing world, and they need to be reconsidered, clarified, and restated often.

The Conference has just published the proceedings of the meeting under the title *Goals for American Education* (Harper, $5.00). It begins with Professor Robert Ulich's essay "On the Rise and Decline of Higher Education" and ends with Dean Rowland W. Dunham's plea for music, entitled "Guiding the Emotions." In between are history, criticism, philosophy, psychology, plans, suggestions, and more history and more suggestions. Everything is here: the book is an embarrassment of riches.

In spite of the wealth of erudition in reference to most of the problems of education displayed in *Goals for American Education,* any reader who expects to find easily and quickly a clear-cut statement of objectives is likely to be disappointed. Even some of the chapters with "goals" in their titles touch the matter only indirectly. The author who more than any other comes to grips with the subject indicated in the title of the symposium is Ordway Tead, Chairman of the Board of Higher Education, City of New York. He quotes six lists of objectives, without giving any of his own. No doubt the reason why he formulated no new statement was that it was not his business to do so: he was writing on "The Role of Objectives in Higher Education." He points out that the role of educators who strive to translate objec-

REV. BONAVENTURE SCHWINN, O.S.B., *vice-president of Mount St. Scholastica College, is the editor of the new American Benedictine Review, published at St. Mary's Abbey in Newark, N. J.*

EDUCATIONAL

We have been making a rather sketchy little survey to find out which **Sheed & Ward** books are being used as textbooks, if they were liked, etc. To us at least the result has been pleasing and surprising—We've put it into a booklet, which, if you are reading this at the Educational Convention, you can pick up from **Ann Reinicke** at **Sheed & Ward's** booth (C51). If you aren't at the Convention, but would still like it, write to **Lucy MacGill** at **S&W** and she will send it to you. If you aren't at the Convention and don't want the booklet, just forget the whole thing and let's talk instead about **Father Leo Trese's VESSEL OF CLAY** ($2) and **Lucile Hasley's REPROACHFULLY YOURS** ($2.25). When a first book by a Michigan priest and a first book by an Indiana girl run away with the sales, they make a pleasant subject for conversation.

REPROACHFULLY YOURS you've read by now, we suppose, so you won't wonder that it goes on steadily selling more each week than it did the week before, with only occasional encouragement (like this) from us.

VESSEL OF CLAY is still so new you may not have had it yet—hurry up. Make no mistake about it, he's a New Star among American Catholic writers, destined, we think, to be the greatest help yet to his fellow priests (for whom the book is primarily written), us laity, and—it seems—non-Catholics.

One thing he and **Lucile Hasley** have in common is that they wrote for Catholics, with no eye sideways on a non-Catholic market. So what happens? Both books have jumped into the general market: you simply can't keep non-Catholics from reading them. Not that we shall try to do any such thing—what could be better for the general public than to have **Mrs. Hasley** show them an inside view of a Catholic family, making them laugh till they cry in the process, and then to have **Father Trese** show them an inside view of the life of a parish priest—one whole day, from the time his alarm clock goes off in the morning till he sets it again at night.

If Catholics get pure delight from both books, non-Catholics may get something else as well—the idea that if you want to know what the Catholic Church in America is like, American Catholics are the people likely to have most information on the subject. And wouldn't *that* be Educational?

The Late Spring **Trumpet** will be about to burst into bloom when you read this, so if you've changed your address or anything, now is the time to let **Lucy MacGill** know.

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tives into reality is no less important than the role of objectives themselves.

The impression persists that some of the chapters of this book are rather foreign to its central theme—goals—and that some of its approaches are remote and devious. It reminds one of the story of the Englishman, the American, the Frenchman, and the German who undertook to write on elephants. The Englishman came up with a book entitled *Elephants—How to Shoot Them.* The American wrote a volume on *The Money-Making Potential of the Circus Elephant.* The Frenchman called his book *Les Amours de l'Éléphant.* Much later, the German published his *Einleitung in das Studium des Elephanten*—in three volumes. *Goals* arouses the suspicion that some of the scholars who contributed to it may have spent a little too much time in German universities.

The style of some of the chapters exemplifies the tendency of philosophers and educators to develop an esoteric jargon that is little less than unintelligible to the uninitiated. It justifies Talleyrand's mot that we use words to conceal our meaning. Exceptions are Harvard's Howard Mumford Jones and Hunter College's George N. Shuster, who prove that one can talk simply and clearly about education, and that the subject is not without its humorous side. Speaking of the vestiges of medievalism in the modern college, in his chapter on "Education and One World," Professor Jones says, "If the student is successful, he becomes a bachelor of arts, whether he is married or not, because the medieval student was called a *baccalaureus,* a word that originally seems to have referred to a farm; and we admit him at commencement to the first degree in the arts with all its rights and privileges, meaning that he can avoid being hanged at the order of a secular court, a privilege students, I imagine, still enthusiastically endorse. And when conferring this remarkable degree upon the young American, we professors dress in black nightgowns with brightly colored hoods (mostly rented from a costume company), because in the Middle Ages these hoods were useful protection against bad weather. Thus quaintly garbed, we walk in procession, swaying gently, two by two, like monks in a monastery, to affirm our descent from the medieval University of Paris."

★

A VERY hopeful sign for the future is the dissatisfaction all the contributors to this symposium feel with present educational policies and practices. There is an utter lack of smugness and a complete absence of the doctrinaire spirit. There is no end of criticism, and, of course, much of it, at least implicitly, is self-criticism. Even more significant is what might be called the global-mindedness of these educators. As Quincy Wright, of the University of Chicago, said, "In the first place it [the environment to which modern people have to be fitted] is the world as a whole. No education for a national, much less a local environment will do. . . . . In the second place the environment today includes all classes of people as well as all sections of the world."

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One of the most enlightened statements in the symposium is that made by Donald C. Stone, Director of Administration, Economic Cooperation Administration, who is a Methodist. At the end of his chapter on "The Function of the University in a Free Society," he says: "I have come to the conclusion . . . that the only scale of values—the only culture—which provides a key for coping with the spreading pockets of totalitarianism within the United States and without is that reflected in Christianity. In Christ we find carried to highest fulfilment the moral values and spiritual potentiality of human life which the world has been seeking through the ages. Only when the leaders who are emerging from our universities zealously apply Christian principles to all problems—ranging from individual behavior on the one hand to the execution of the European Recovery Program on the other—will we establish a solid basis for self-realization and a 'one world' free society."

That one hundred educators with such different backgrounds and divergent, indeed, conflicting, philosophies should voluntarily come together and in the most friendly possible manner with deep humility and perfect freedom discuss the inadequacies of their profession and earnestly plan for the future shows that some of the most important goals of American education have been reached.

Books

The School for Wives, Robert, and Genevieve. André Gide. Knopf. $2.75.

THE GERMAN critic Pfleger has characterized Gide as "the most complicated apostate of our age." Raised in Protestant orthodoxy, it was early in his literary career that Gide decided to do some Biblical interpretation of his own. Fascinated by the injunction that, "He who loseth his life shall find it," the young Frenchman decided that for him self-abnegation should mean the casting off of all the restraints and preconceptions with which religion, tradition, and convention had encumbered him. It was in the freedom of the Natural Man that he would find his life, find himself. Even his definition of the word "nature" was distinctly his own; to him there was nothing unnatural in his predilection for homosexual practices.

It hardly is to be expected, then, that *The School for Wives* will recommend itself as a chatty, and disinterested directive for brides-to-be. Actually it is the purported diary of one Eveline, from the first stages of her hero-worshipping love for Robert, until the time twenty years later when she seeks escape from her hated mar-

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riage with him. As a nurse in a hospital for contagious diseases, she finds the ultimate surcease. Eveline's diary is followed by Robert's own apologia, and then by Genevieve's written effort to analyze her confused and rebellious soul. Genevieve is the daughter of Eveline and Robert.

The plot, if it can be called such, concerns itself with the emancipation of Eveline's mind from the fetters of her sheltered and bourgeois upbringing. As she reads her way through the great agnostic and free-thinking authors, her husband ceases to be the noble soul she thought him. Instead, her new vision reveals him as a contemptible faker, trying to hide his smallness and his meanness behind a facade of piety and high-sounding sentiments.

Robert's defense, when he is allowed to make it, is that by nobility of speech he hopes to develop in himself a corresponding nobility of emotion; by always doing the right thing, he hopes to train his will to desire the right thing. He confesses that nature will always fall short of the ideal. He is shocked to think that his aspiring efforts should be classed as hypocrisy.

Gide's own sympathies, naturally, are all with Eveline. No one can write a piece of creative literature without putting a bit of himself into it. The author has put more than a bit of himself into this latest Knopf translation (by Dorothy Bussy). Eveline and Genevieve between them are a composite mouthpiece for Gide's own philosophy, which has been labeled as moral nihilism. In his essay on Dostoievsky, Gide has said that "Good intentions make bad literature. There is not a work of art to which the devil has not contributed." Strangely enough Dostoievsky—in *The Brothers Karamazov* for example—himself gives the lie to Gide's philosophy. The great Russian views evil as inevitable and as an object of compassion, but never seeks to interchange it with the good.

AS TO the literary excellence of *The School for Wives, Robert, and Genevieve,* it would be presumptuous to attempt to add to Gide's laurels. Although still living, his immortality in the world of letters is too well and universally established to need further recommendation. While acknowledging his mastery of literary style and the felicity of his prose, it is worth remembering that in the philosophy of a Christian there can be no truly great work of art which ignores, much less denies, man's splendid origin and his equally splendid destiny. It is a philosophy of art which is not too widely accepted today. But if Christian integrity of life means anything at all, then certainly we cannot watch the Soul being replaced by the Unconscious, and say, in the name of Art, that it really doesn't matter. Whatever claims may be made in behalf of Gide as a genuine artist—an exponent of the True and a builder of the Beautiful—the acknowledgment of those claims will fluctuate according to each critic's own philosophy and measure of values.

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The Cardinal. Henry Morton Robinson. Simon and Schuster. $3.50.

MR. ROBINSON in an explanatory preface says that Stephen Fermoyle, the Cardinal of his title, is a composite of all the priests he has ever known. Fermoyle also seems to be a clerical amalgam of Ben the Bootblack, Tattered Tom, Grit the Young Boatman and every Algerian hero who ever reached the top via the pluck-and-luck ladder. The book opens with young, strong-bodied, strong-minded, strong-willed, Boston-Irish Father Fermoyle returning to America fresh from his final studies in Rome. Five hundred and seventy-nine pages later, after a stupendously successful career as city curate, rural pastor, Cardinal's secretary, Vatican functionary, American bishop and archbishop, he is himself wearing the red hat. And it is beginning to look as if Cardinal Fermoyle might eventually be the first American to wear the fisherman's ring, too.

Stephen's life, like Stephen's story, is fast-moving and highly dramatic. Adventures, spiritual and physical, get to be a habit with him. Throughout, the author manages to light every fresh incident on the butt of the last. Each one seems meant to illustrate a point of Catholic teaching, defend a dogmatic position or explain some thorny question of Church policy. There are studiously detailed glimpses of Catholic life woven in: Catholic schools, hospitals, rectories, convents, monasteries, chancery offices, Vatican council rooms, etc. All this, of course, calls for contrivance on the grand scale—only the Lannie Budd series would appear to give the book any serious competition on this score—but Mr. Robinson goes about his self-appointed tasks blithely and bravely, without so much as a by-your-leave. Among other brushes with history, Stephen advises Al Smith on how to handle the Church-State question during the 1928 campaign, chats with Pius XI about the Church's attitude toward Mussolini and casts a vote for Eugenio Cardinal Pacelli, an old friend, at the 1939 papal elections. But Stephen is meant to be more than a mitered guide through the maze of modern ecclesiastical history. There are purely fictional settings and characters in the book, too. Once in Italy Monsignor Fermoyle was even distracted, but only momentarily, by a lovely, aristocratic lady. This deflection, though, is almost unique in the straight and narrow course that moves inexorably upward and onward. Throughout all this, Stephen remains a two-dimensional figure. The novel written about him is roughly one dimension and a half.

The Cardinal is like an absurdly oversized version of one of those tract-in-dialogue pamphlets found in the rear of a church. It is quite evident that the author went about writing it with admirable devotion and determination—perhaps he really intended to write the Answer to Blanshard and then later decided to put it to music, contriving situations and incidents to fit each point as he checked it off the list. This reviewer found it hard to take the book seriously as a novel. Somehow I got the distinct impression that Mr. Robinson, who knows his way around the New York publishing world, felt the same way.

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